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Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba

Letter dated 27 October 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to attach the Final Declaration of the VIIIth Forum of Cuban Civil Society against the Embargo, adopted in Havana on 19 October 2011 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would arrange for this Declaration to be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 41.

(*Signed*) Pedro **Núñez Mosquera**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 27 October 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Final Declaration of the VIIIth Forum of Cuban Civil Society against the Embargo, issued in Havana on 19 October 2011

On the occasion of the forthcoming consideration by the General Assembly of the implementation of its resolution 65/6 entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", 173 Cuban civil society organizations and regional and international organizations with headquarters in Cuba met to discuss the effects on the Cuban people of the continuation and intensification of this genocidal policy.

1. The extraterritorial reach of the embargo has continued to expand. There is increased persecution and imposition of sanctions on citizens and businesses of third countries which maintain or intend to establish commercial, financial, cooperation or scientific and technical relations with Cuba. This is illustrated by the examples given in the report submitted by the Cuban Government to the General Assembly. In addition to complicating or preventing trading by Cuba and obstructing our country's economic and social development, these actions are actually endangering the lives of our citizens by affecting access to medicines and medical equipment and are a flagrant violation of the principles underlying international trade and a violation of the sovereignty of third States.

2. As regards new information and communication technology, Cuba has been prevented from using fibre optic cables laid near its coastline and has to use satellite communications, involving huge additional foreign currency expenditure for the Cuban State and limiting the bandwidth available to Cuba. Because of pressure from the United States Government, Cuba is denied access to major scientific and technical databanks, since 12 of the 14 main servers of the Network of Networks are located in United States territory.

3. With the goal of denying Cuba access to foreign currency, our country is still prohibited from using United States dollars in its financial transactions and heavy sanctions are imposed on banks that deal with Cuba. Vessels which enter Cuban ports are still prohibited from entering United States ports for the next 180 days, resulting in very high freight charges for Cuban imports and preventing us from benefiting from cruise ship tourism, which is very important for the entire Caribbean region.

4. United States citizens are still not allowed to visit Cuba as tourists and this affects the convertible currency revenue much needed by our country. This measure violates the civil and political rights of United States citizens, despite the growing opposition from United States civil society and even from important sectors of the United States Congress. Meanwhile, the creation of organizations with subversive aims is still being encouraged and financed with huge sums through the United States Agency for International Development publicly and through other agencies covertly, with the aim of portraying them as a growing internal opposition.

5. Despite the attempts of the United States Government to give the impression that its policy of embargo against Cuba has been relaxed, nothing has changed.

6. For the twentieth time since 1992, the General Assembly will be considering a draft resolution requesting the Government of the United States to end the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by that country against Cuba. The overwhelming majority of States Members of the United Nations has expressed support for ending the embargo against Cuba, as shown by the voting, which confirms the isolation of the United States in this issue and the fallacy of the arguments used by it to maintain its position.

7. The embargo is an illegal act in breach of international law and qualifies as an international crime of genocide, as provided in the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. It also disregards the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and violates the right to development of a sovereign State. It is a violation of the human rights of the people of Cuba.

8. We are convinced that on this occasion the international community, defending the basic principles which should govern international relations, will vote against this failed, illegal and inhuman policy of the United States Government of using hunger and disease to force the people of Cuba to surrender and trying to make them stop defending their right to enjoy national independence and sovereignty and to adopt the economic, political and social regime that they have freely chosen.

9. We acknowledge and are grateful for the broad and effective solidarity with our country displayed by thousands of civil society organizations throughout the world, including organizations of the people of the United States; we very much appreciate their supportive solidarity in the struggle to end the unfair and immoral policy pursued by the United States Government against our people and encourage them to continue their opposition to the genocidal embargo and to step up actions requesting the United States Government to respect the universal rejection of this policy and to end its unilateral coercive measures.